NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

WEEKLY STAFF NEWSLETTER
May 8, 1998
"As submitted" (not formattted) edition

BILL BALLARD PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE CURATOR

The Zoology Department is pleased to announced that Bill Ballard (Insects) has been promoted to Associate Curator. Bill, who holds an MSc degree from the Imperial College at Silwood Park, Ascot (U.K.) and a PhD from the University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia) came to The Field Museum in 1995, after postdoctoral appointments at the CSIRO Division of Entomology (Canberra, Australia) and the University of Chicago. During his few years of Field Museum residence, Bill has made substantial contributions to the field of molecular biology and entomology (focusing on co-evolutionary processes within and among species), and has integrated innovative cross-disciplinary, educational, and collection management applications into his own research program. His participation in several successful National Science Foundation grant-funded projects (including his prestigious 1997 CAREER award), another round of BUG CAMP (a summer program to teach insect biodiversity to high school students), as well as the new seminar series, will keep Bill busy over the next few months!

BIELER RECEIVES SMITHSONIAN AWARD

Rüdiger Bieler (Associate Curator & Chairman, Zoology) has received a 1998 Smithsonian Marine Station Award for his fieldwork on mollusks in southeastern Florida and the Florida Keys. The award will cover travel expenses, laboratory and research vessel time during his 1998 field season. This award marks the 13th consecutive year in which Rüdiger has successfully secured federal or foundation grant funding for his Florida fieldwork. The current project, in collaboration with Invertebrates Research Associate and AMNH curator Paula Mikkelsen, focuses on an assessment of molluscan biodiversity of the entire Florida Keys region. Preliminary results of new field collecting and evaluation of existing collections already have doubled (!) the number of recognized gastropod and bivalve species, compared to the only list published previously. Rüdiger recently returned from a planning trip to Florida during which he arranged for collecting permits in state and federal waters, planned upcoming research vessel and equipment use, prepared for additional federal grant applications, and visited with administrators and colleagues at the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary, the National Undersea Research Center, the Pigeon Island Mote Marine Laboratory field station, the Florida Marine Research Institute in St. Petersburg, and the University of Miami.

FIELD MUSEUM SUMMER SEMINAR SERIES

Lecture Hall 2 at 4.30pm

Parking: From 4:00 p.m. each Wednesday 15 car spaces will be reserved in the Field Museum West Lot. Contact Bill Ballard for enquires (ballard@fmnh.org).

May 13	Dr. Ellen Simms University of Chicago Evolution of rhizopine in rhizobium: is it kin by selection?
May 20	Dr. Robert Betz, Northeastern Illinois University Prairie Remnants and Prarie Restoration Barbecue
May 27	Dr. Robert Welsh, Field Museum Between boundaries: social process and cultural diversity
June 3	Dr. Ralph Harvey, Case Western Life On Mars? Barbecue
June 10	Dr. Stephen Pruett-Jones, University of Chicago Title to be announced
June 17	Dr. William Burger, The Field Museum The real difference between monocots and dicots: The question of cotyledon homolohy in Angiosperms.
June 24	Dr. Luisa Maffi, northwestern university Language as a resource for nature
July 1	TBA
July 8	TBA
July 15	Dr. Bernard Greenberg, Uiniversity of Illinois at Chicago. Maggots and murder: Flies as forensic indicators
July 22	Dr. Andrew Douglas, The Field Museum Proteaceae, is it one of nature's early experiments in flowering?
July 29	Dr Alan Tempelton, Washington University, St. Louis, Genetic Structure of Human Populations Barbecue
August 5	TBA
August 12	Dr. Marlyn Houck, Texas A and M. Title to be announced Barbecue
August 19	Dr. Robyn Burnham, The University of Michigan. New developments in the history of neotropical vegetation.
August 26	Dr. Michael Dietler, University of Chicago Title to be announced

VOICE MAIL TROUBLE???

It is important for all staff to be aware of voice mail capacity. When our system reaches 100%, no messages can be left for anyone. That means our callers can not leave messages. We seem to be reaching 100% every week. It is important that messages are deleted. We need everyone's help. So please make sure to "clean" your voice mail at the end of the day. Voice Mail Tip: You can pick up your messages from any touch tone phone. If you have any questions, our 0perator will be glad to help you. Thank you for your cooperation!

FIELD NIGHTS ARE COMING!

In celebration of Downtown Thursday Nights,
a joint project of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce,
The Field Museum will be open to the public on Thursday evenings,
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.,
from June 18 - August 27 (except July 23rd).

GENERAL ADMISSION WILL BE FREE!

This will provide a chance for people to come and see what's new this summer at the Museum and enjoy the beautiful new Museum Campus Chicago in the evening.

Resurfacing and patching in the west lot

Weather permitting -- May 11-14 the west lot will be resurfaced and patched. Half the lot will be closed on May 11 and 12 (1/2 each day) for patching. From May 13 - May 14 at 10:00 a.m. the lot will be closed for resurfacing. **Questions? Call Ron Cundiff (Security)**

AAM AWARDS

It is anticipated that a number of awards at the American Association of Museums 1998 meeting will be given to Field Museum staff members. It is the policy of the *Natural News* to print news of awards after they are officially given. We look forward to the occasion!

EDUCATION

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS INVITED

PRESENTATION BY NATHAN MYHRVOLD

Staff and volunteers are invited to hear Nathan Myhrvold Ph.D., Chief Technology Officer of Microsoft, give a presentation "Supersonic Dinosaurs" on Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m. Discover the worlds of supersonic dinosaurs and "cyberpaleontology" with a keynote presentation by Nathan Myhrvold. Based on research he conducted with Philip Currie, Ph.D. of the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology, Myhrvold will share how he used computer simulations to explore how some dinosaurs may have broken the sound barrier by simply whipping their powerful tails. He will also provide theories on why these dinosaurs might have produced these loud booms.

A block of free tickets is being held for staff and volunteers which will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. You are welcome to a ticket for yourself and for one guest (2 complimentary tickets per staff member or volunteer). You may purchase tickets for any additional guests you would like to bring. Please contact Sandra Blake in the Education Department (x854) for your ticket(s).

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has made the first days of **Assignment: Rescue** such a success.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of many, including David Layman, Neil Keliher, Lori Walsh, and Nel Fetherling, **Assignment: Rescue** opened to a terrific press preview last Friday hosted by our Public Relations Department. The following Exhibits Department staff created this extremely intricate exhibit in a very short amount of time: April Blazevic, Paul Brunsvold, George Chavez, Charlie Cho, Thomas Czajkowski, Russ Flack, Heather Graff, Paula Horecny, Elizabeth Kantorski, Lance Kirsch, Karen Olenski, Michael Paha, John Petreikis, Susan Phillips, Katherine Stransky, Beth Tanner, Matthew Timms, Dirk Urban, and Thatcher Waller.

In the Development Department, Sandy Karuschak, Ethel Kaplan, and Veronica Alexander worked to meet fundraising goals. The Education Department organized a sensational summer of programs and volunteer opportunities, together with Patti Stratton. Felisia Wesson and Lisa Wodis were integral to preparing the exhibit and audio-tour contracts and reporting systems. Ray Bondoc got the audio tour up and running. Ron Cundiff and Ray Van Hook put in place security guards and systems. Michael Benham and Debbie Kvapi coordinated the housekeeping staff. Annie Crawley and Liz Sneed organized public services lectures and training. Rayfield Drake, Ron Hall, and Eric Jernigan set-up audio-visual systems. Ernst Pierre-Toussaint, Earl Duncan, and John Mazza wired the hall and are monitoring the stringent HVAC requirements. Emma Moskalevskaya, Marla Camp, Nadine Kendra, and Jasen Schrock provided essential administrative support. Jill Mandler and Julie Lockhart have stocked their store with relevant items, and the whole Special Events staff has been hard at work planning evening rentals.

On behalf of the entire Exhibits department, we would like to thank our managers-Jean Cattell, Laura Gates, Carrie Hageman, Melissa Hilton, Ray Leo, and Julie Thomas, for their direction and support.

We are looking forward to a terrific summer!

Living Colors: A Butterfly Garden

Staff & Volunteer
Exhibit Preview

Monday, May 18, 1998
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Living Colors: A Butterfly Garden will open to the public on May 23rd and will run through September 7th. This is your opportunity to preview one of our special summer exhibits and experience the excitement first hand. This walk-through garden filled with live butterflies will highlight environmental issues associated with these beautiful creatures. It will contain species indigenous to the Midwest in the three ecosystems: woodland, prairie, and backyard. If you have questions about this preview, call the Human Resources Dept. at ext. 531.

Please join us!!

WELCOME!

Staff who began their employment in April

Jaime Aguilar	Museum Stores	Sales Clerk
Julie Baker	Finance	Assistant to V.P.
Andrew Faison	Visitor Services	Visitor Services Rep
David Foster	Exhibits	Sr. Coord. Special Exhibits
Carmen Gilcrest	Museum Stores	Sales Clerk
David Hodges	Exhibits	Graphic Designer
Mary Kehoe	Museum Stores	Sales Clerk
Walter Markham	Visitor Services	Visitor Services Rep
German Rueda	Museum Stores	Store Supervisor
Sylvie Perret	Visitor Services	Visitor Services Rep

WELCOME BACK!

Staff who were rehired during April

Matt Matcuk	Exhibits	Exhibit Developer/Writer

CONGRATULATIONS!

Staff who were promoted or changed positions in April

	From	To
Andrew Blunston	Security Officer III	Security/Lead Shipping Officer

GOODBYE AND BEST WISHES!

Staff who ended employment in April

Michelle Alcaraz	Museum Stores	Supervisor
Jason Deboer	Anthropology	Secretary
Cathy Geraghty	ECP	Program Manager
25 yrs. Rudolph Gomez	Security	Security Supervisor
Anna Graybeal	Zoology/AMPH & Reps	Assistant Curator
Sarah Gunderson	Development	Events Coordinator

For your information...
...a message from Museum Affairs.

Almost everywhere you look, you can tell something **BIG** is going on here at The Field–construction, painting, roped-off areas, temporary walls. You may be wondering, "What on earth is happening around here?!" Well, in a word, lots! And we certainly don't want you to be in the dark, so here's a brief rundown of some of the current and upcoming "happenings" at the Museum.

Remember the first time you walked in to Stanley Field Hall and were struck with its grandeur and beauty? Well, imagine it even *more* breathtaking and lovely. Stanley Field Hall is in the midst of putting a new suit of clothes on its impressive frame. A new color scheme, furnishings and other changes will all combine to create a spruced-up, more elegant main hall in time for the Museum Campus opening weekend, June 26th - 28th.

The first step, which is already taking place, is the removal of several of the large banners lining both sides of the main hall. Four banners will remain, two in the center on each side of the hall. In this way, the banners will emphasize the east/west axis and the location of stairs to the ground floor. These banners will be rotated periodically, providing a subtle change of color and subject throughout the year.

Starting May 6th, we will begin painting throughout Stanley Field Hall. The week of May 11th electrical work will begin, and the week of May 18th we'll be installing new historical lighting fixtures in the main floor loggias.

During the last week in May, a large compass decal will be applied to the central floor area in Stanley Field Hall, and the main floor fossil prep lab and *Brachiosaurus* bone enclosure at the north end of the hall will be permanently removed.

Also, in early June, a new central information desk, membership desk, ticket desks and information kiosks will be installed.

Finally, in mid-August, new, more comfortable benches will arrive and be placed in and around Stanley Field Hall so that our visitors can rest and plan their journey through the Museum.

Many people throughout The Field Museum are working very hard to make all of these improvements happen. The inconvenience to employees and visitors should be minimal, and the payoff will no doubt be wonderful!

Discover Your Campus

Museum Campus Staff and Volunteers you are invited to "Discover Your Campus" during the highlighted weeks below. We want to all better understand our friends while learning about one another's summer exhibits. So come on out of your area and into your neighbor's...
If you have any questions ask Annie Crawley ext. 378.

DIVE INTO THE SHEDD!

May 11- May 15

Look for the CAMPUS DESK in the main foyer and present your I.D. badge and you will be given a VIP ticket. This will allow you immediate entry into our Oceanarium and/or Aquarium.

- Coral Reef Dives...11:00am and 2:00pm daily
- Marine Mammal Presentations.....10:30 - 12:00 - 1:30 - 3:30 DAILY
- Don't miss our NEW Seahorse Symphony Exhibit in the Oceanarium opens May 10th
- Check special event boards in Foyer or Oceanarium entrance for Narrations, Animal Handling sessions, Tours, etc. These change daily.

METAMORPHOSIS AT THE FIELD

June 1-June 5

Please show your ID badge and ask a cashier for a ticket to our special exhibit *Living Colors: A Butterfly Garden.* Stop by our information booth for more information on special programming, tours and brochures for our special exhibits.

- Highlight Tours of The Field Museum are daily at 11:00am and 2pm
- Get a ticket from a cashier for *Living Colors: A Butterfly Garden*
- Walk through our *Assignment: Rescue The Story of Varian Fry* exhibit
- Have a walk through *Life Over Time,* our incredible dinosaur exhibit

Put Your Head in the Clouds at the Adler

June 15-June 19

Please show your ID and ask a cashier for a ticket to our new sky show. Stop by our information booth for more information on special programming and our science fiction movies we will be showing during *"Downtown Thursday Nights."*

- Opening June 12, *"Clouds of Fire: The Origins of Stars"* is our new multi-media sky show shown daily at 11, 2, & 4 (6 & 8 on Friday)
- Our sky shows start every hour on the hour and last around fifty minutes
- *Find out our plans for our virtual reality theatre opening late fall*

Staff and Volunteers

You're Invited

Construction Update – May 8, 1998

In preparation for the "re-opening" of The Field Museum in conjunction with the opening of the Museum Campus, many improvements are being made in the public areas. Below is a summary of the status of some of them. If you want more detail or have further questions, please call the "contact" departments.

Project	Contact Department	Status	Scheduled Completion
Grainger Hall	Exhibits	Construction & Installation	May 19
Hall 10 (Northwest Coast)	Exhibits	Design & preliminary restoration	May 29
McDonald's Geology Prep Lab	Exhibits	Construction completed	May 22
Corner Bakery	Aux. Services & FP&O	Demolition/ Construction	Early July
North Entrance for Corner Bakery	FP&O	Design	Summer 1998
Museum Store	Aux. Services & FP&O	Construction	May 23
McDonald's Renovation/Terrace	Aux. Services & FP&O	Design/ Review	Summer 1998
Washroom (McDonald's) Renovation	FP&O	Construction -- Toilet facility completed	May 22
South Entrance	FP&O	Design review – construction to begin by Labor Day	September 1998

Additionally please note that improvements were made to assure that emergency power will run the fire pump (April 28) and that the ground floor ceiling replacement is proceeding well and should be completed within two weeks.

Editor's Note: Due to a flood of last-minute articles and scheduling contradictions (including a two-day vacation), the usual formatting and editing of the *Natural News* was lightly done this week. Please remember that the deadline is Tuesday at noon. Please submit articles via email or on floppy disk in WordPerfect or MSWord. Thanks.

RIEPPEL'S RELENTLESS REPTILE RESEARCH

In March, Olivier visited the Stuttgart Natural History Museum, the Paleontological Museum in Bayreuth, and the Paleontological Collections in Munich, to pursue his work on the skull anatomy of armoured placodonts known as cyamodontoids. The placodonts are a group of marine reptiles from the Triassic which remained restricted to the western Tethys, the precursor of the Mediterranean sea. As their name implies, they have a crushing dentition which indicates that they preyed on hard-shelled invertebrates. The armored placodonts developed a body shell which closely resembles that of turtles. This was the reason why earlier this century cyamodontoids were though to be related to turtles. Olivier is in the process of testing this hypothesis on the basis of a detailed study of the cranial anatomy of the cyamodontoids. The data collected so far indicate that cyamodontoids and turtles probably represent the most striking example of convergence, i.e., independently acquired similarity) among reptiles. The question here is how we distinguish convergence from homology, i.e., similarity due to common ancestry. His work on turtles and cyamodontoids forces Olivier once again to address the issue what, indeed, the observational basis is for what we call "similarity" in systematic research. This is also the title of a book chapter which Olivier is currently working on.

GRADUATING MAMMALOGISTS

On Tuesday, April 28, John Ososky successfully defended his Masters' Thesis, entitled "Diets of leopard and golden cat (Carnivora, Felidae) in Ndoki National Park, Republic of Congo." John formerly worked in the Mammal, Fishes, and Birds divisions of the Department of Zoology. He later enrolled in graduate school at Northern Illinois University. The research was conducted in the Mammal collections, using our excellent collections from Equatorial Africa, and supervised by his committee members Julian Kerbis and Bruce Patterson (Zoology/Mammals), as well as Peter Meserve (Research Associate/Zoology).

Also last week, Julie Ann Uherka presented her Senior Thesis in Environmental Studies at the University of Chicago, entitled "The Giant Panda: Threats to its existence," prepared under the supervision of Bruce Patterson.

A PARTNERSHIP FORGED BY MAN-EATERS On 7 April, John McCarter and David Western signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Field Museum and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). The KWS is one of Africa's premier natural history institutions and is responsible for management and protection of wildlife and parks. The recently signed MoU covers a wide range of potential interactions envisioned between Field Museum and KWS, including research, exhibits, and education. The MoU has its roots in the research interests of Chap Kusimba (Anthropology), Julian Kerbis, Tom Gnoske, and Bruce Patterson (all Zoology). Collectively, the Tsavo Research Program has defined a wide-ranging agenda in the natural and cultural history of the Tsavo region, including archaeology, taphonomy, biology and genetics of lions, and general faunal surveys. Chap Kusimba recently left for five weeks in Tsavo to finalize permit applications and initiate a series of anthropological and ethnological investigations. The group returns to Kenya en masse in September and October to begin excavations at the Man-Eaters' Den, discovered in April 1997 by Kerbis and Gnoske.

The Tsavo Research Program has also been working with colleagues in Exhibits (especially Barbara Ceiga and Rich Faron), Education (particularly Dan Brinkmeier and Mary Ellen Munley), and Institutional Advancement (new Tours Manager Todd Nielsen) to identify interdisciplinary opportunities for FM programming in Tsavo. Building on Tom Gnoske's original vision, TRP and Exhibits will soon finalize an outline for the Tsavo Interpretative Centre, a visitors' center/exhibit to be built near the Man-eaters Den. KWS will use this document as a proposal in its own fund-raising for the exhibit. We are also investigating avenues for public outreach, education, and community involvement nearby, in Voi, because effective conservation the world over rests in

the hands of local communities. Finally, we are exploring options for involving FM members and donors in the excavations, surveys, and other programs underway in Tsavo, using as a model the donor-participation programs of EarthWatch.

****

Please welcome Mr. Omari Ilambu, who arrived in Chicago on May 1 to begin a 3 month research program. His studies follow his participation in the African Tropical Biodiversity Program (ATBP) in Uganda in 1997. ATBP is a fundamental component of the Uganda/Field Museum, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation-funded training program which is coordinated on this end by Julian Kerbis Peterhans (Adjunct Curator, Zoology). Omari has surveyed most of the world's mountain (G. gorilla beringei) and eastern lowland gorillas (G. gorilla graueri) over the past several years. While here, Onari will work with Julian and Joe Walsh (Univ. of Chicago doctoral candidate) on the biogeography and alpha-taxonomy of select taxa of central African small mammals. Omari will also be traveling to the Wildlife Conservation Society (New York) to map the distribution of endangered central African primates including gorillas. Omari can be reached at x 249.

****

John Slapcinsky (Zoology) returned from the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee (the center of diversity for North American snails and slugs) after teaching a two day workshop entitled "Terrestrial mollusks of the southern Appalachians" for the U.S. Forest Service at the Forest Service's offices in Asheville, North Carolina. Workshop participants included land managers from Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia who were introduced to ecology and life history of snails and learned how to sample, preserve and identify snails and slugs. Some of this sampling information is a direct result of Field Museum's efforts to develop a Rapid Assessment Program for Illinois (IRAP). The workshop also included a field trip that documented the occurrence of several PET (Protected, Endangered or Threatened) species of slugs and snails in a new locale; including one (possibly a new species) from a genus previously recorded only three times.

****

WEIGHT WATCHERS

You may notice that the Museum staff is a little leaner. That's because the 21 Museum Weight Watchers have lost a total of **203 pounds**! If you are interested in joining, we are having a Weight Watcher's "Open House" on Thursday, May 14th, from noon until 1:00pm in Lecture Hall 2. Since this is a regular meeting, you will see first hand what Weight Watchers is all about. It is a program that promotes healthy eating habits, increased activity, behavioral changes and group support as a way to a healthier and slimmer you.

Once again, we will need at least 18 people to commit to the program and the membership fee in order to maintain Weight Watchers At Work. If we can do this, we will continue to hold meetings on Thursdays, from noon until 1:00 pm, in Dining Rooms C and D.

FITNESS CLASS

The fitness classes are another great way to get in shape for summer! They are held Tuesdays and Thursdays a 5:15 pm until 6:15 pm in the Geology Hall. The classes get your heart pumping and give your muscles a real workout. People of all ages, sexes and fitness levels are **always welcome**.

Please call Carole Kasarda, ext 529, with questions regarding these programs.